The Silent Messenger

The Silent Messenger is an image taken from a 1970 photograph of a lone Shriner carrying a child in one arm and her crutches in the other. Adopted by Shriners as a symbol of what Shriners do. This Statue is located in Cedar Rapid, Iowa at the El Kahir Shrine Temple. This is a story about one Silent Messenger among many.

A tall man walked along a road with a young girl in one arm and her crutches in the other. A stranger approached intrigued by this man walking on this road wearing an Arabian looking hat he would learn was called a fez. Curious, he asked the man, “What are you doing carrying this child on this road less traveled?” The man replied, “I am helping all of the children in need.” The stranger replied that he could not possibly help all of the children in need, there must be millions. To which the man replied without hesitation, “That may be but I can help this one.”

The fact is this man was not walking alone; he was walking on a path set by thousands who had walked before him. This man was a Shriner doing what Shriners do; helping children in need one child at a time. Walking a road less traveled carrying a single child, a silent messenger. This was not the first time this man had carried a child.

Fifty years before he would get up before the sun and help fix pancakes for an annual pancake breakfast. This man was always the first to arrive and the last to leave. With each pancake sold, one more child carried by a silent messenger.

When there was a job to be done that would help a child there was no need to ask, he was always there. Millions have enjoyed a Shrine Circus. This Shriner would help line up needed volunteers and purchase and sell novelties to raise money for a transportation fund used to carry local children to a Shrine Hospital for treatment. With each volunteer and novelty sold, one more child carried by a silent messenger.

At each Shrine Circus, they would sell hundreds of balloons on a stick. To blow up the balloons this Shriner built a special bowl to hold balloons with a rubber tipped air jet used to fill the balloons. With each balloon sold, one more child carried by a silent messenger.
Hundreds of times this Shriner has carried an American flag to lead a community parade. He walked proud to represent his Country, his Shrine Temple and his Color Guard Unit. With each step, one more child carried by a silent messenger.

When this Shriner was Potentate of his Shrine Temple he had a belt buckle made in the shape of his state, emblazoned with his temple name and a scimitar. With each belt buckle sold, one more child carried by a silent messenger.

With the help of a local farmer who happened to be a Shrine Clown who carried a pet chicken on his head, this Shriner helped organize an annual corn maze. Each year hundreds would venture in to the maze and be scared by special skits as they wandered through the maze near Halloween. With each maze guest, one more child carried by a silent messenger.

Many times this Shriner would help others carry a child. Serving on the Board of his State’s Shrine Bowl Game, young men and women would compete in this annual event to raise money for Shrine Hospitals across the country. With each ticket sold and sponsorship received, one more child carried by a silent messenger.

Always this Shriner was a great father and grandfather. There was never a better cheerleader for his boy and his girl. Twice he flew across the country to watch his granddaughter run a 60 second race. On another occasion, he drove hundreds of miles to watch his other granddaughter play in her first college softball game. His grandson had asked his grandpa to sign his petition to join Masons on his 75th birthday. He later bought his grandson a perpetual membership to Shrine for his college graduation. With each act of fatherly love, one more child carried by a silent messenger.

No matter what the project, if there was a need, this Shriner would step forward to help. If there was a sign to be made, an office to be remodeled, recycling to be arranged or a financial plan to be developed this Shriner was there. With each act of kindness, one more child carried by a silent messenger.

As his legs tired and his lungs began to fail him, this Shriner would help and support others carry a child. As a trusted adviser, this Shriner would mentor Shriners near and far. With each thoughtful comment or word of support and encouragement, one more child carried by a silent messenger.

With legs too tired to carry a flag let alone a child in need, this Shriner would speak with pride to anyone who would listen about the Shrine Hospitals and how a child in need could be helped with a single call. With each tearful talk, one more child carried by a silent messenger.
This silent messenger, like all Shriners before him, first joined the Masons as an Entered Apprentice becoming a Master Mason meeting all others on the level. He is truly comfortable speaking with an Entered Apprentice, Worshipful Master, Potentate or even Imperial Sir. His name is not important because it is not about him. It is about the child he carries. He knows that each child he carries has a name, has dreams, has aspirations and has a need. Alone this silent messenger cannot help every child but on this day he can help this one. Together with thousands of Shriners just like him they can carry thousands of children through Shrine Hospitals across the country. Within the ranks of Shrine, these silent messengers are called, “Nobles.” An appropriate name because there can be no more noble person than the one who stoops down to help a child. “No man has ever stood so tall as when he stooped to help a child.”

Author’s note: This Shriner was my Dad, L. Dean Redmon. He was Potentate of the El Kahir Shrine Temple in 1993. This was written by his very proud son, also a Shriner to celebrate his 50 years as a Shriner. I had a chance to share this with him but didn’t get the chance to share his 50 year Shrine Certificate.

Dad, you have set huge footprints in the sand that we can all follow. You have helped enough, it’s time to rest. It’s our turn now. Through the path you set and the humble steps that helped carry us all, you will always be in our hearts and prayers. I love you Dad.

It may be true that we cannot help every child in need but with a loving heart, a few good deeds and a dollar here and there we can sure help carry children one at a time. If you are moved to help carry a child, to honor my Dad or another Silent Messenger you may know, please donate your time or contribute your treasures. One dollar at a time will help this silent messenger and those following his path to help carry every child in need. In addition to the Shrine Hospitals, Dad always supported the El Kahir Shrine Temple Transportation Fund used to transport children and their families to Shrine Hospitals across the country.

For a Silent Messenger
In Memory of L. Dean Redmon
El Kahir Shrine Temple
Transportation Fund
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For a Silent Messenger
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